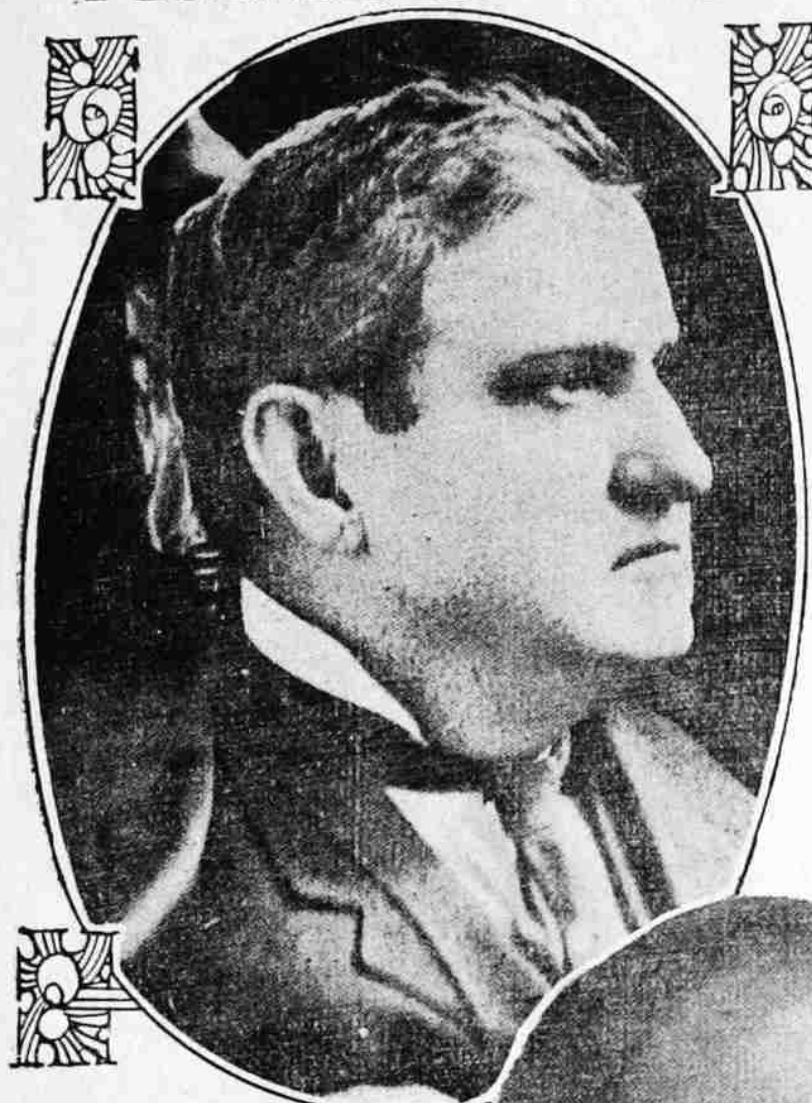


"THE HOUSE OF GABFEST"

Congressional
Record Shows the
United States
Senate Is Most
Talkative Body in
World--Debate
Is Unrestricted
by
Rules



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The United States Senate has rightly earned the title of the House of Gabfest, which was applied to it by a spectator in the galleries. The United States Senate is the most deliberative body in the world. According to the rules of procedure no vote can be taken on any measure until after everybody is through talking on that measure.

The Senate contends it is the most representative body in the United States. The House of Representatives is too business like in its proceedings, according to the Senators. They do not have enough time for talking. The upheaval against Speaker Joseph Cannon was due more to his adherence to the czar-like rules of Speaker Reed in limiting debate and refusing to recognize a member when time had come for voting.

The House of Representatives has been declared to be too arbitrarily conducted. Some Representatives want some of the right of the Senators. They want to talk.

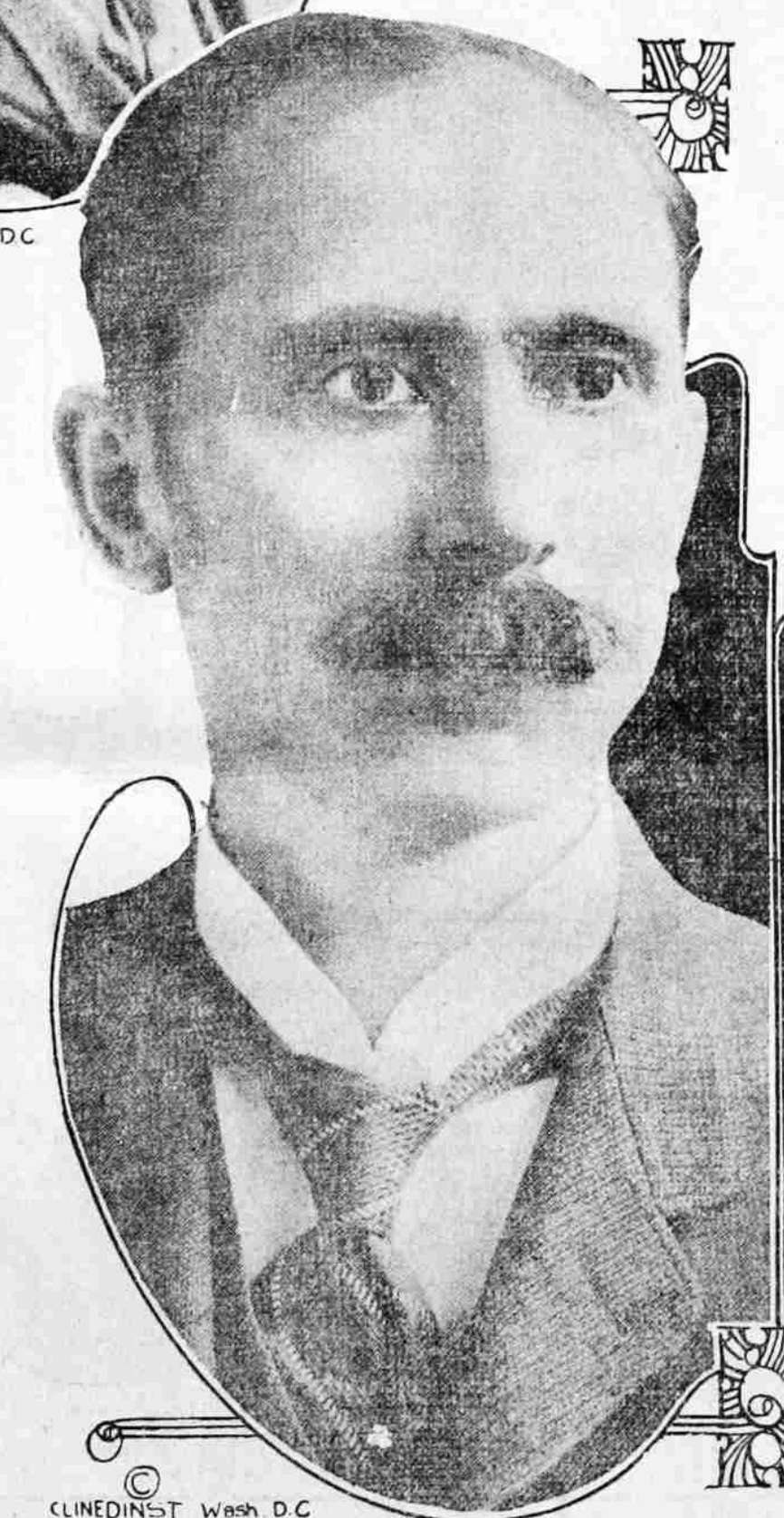
Under the rule in the United States Senate any measure can be blocked indefinitely by talking. Although every member has his mind made up as to how he wants to vote there is nothing to prohibit another member rising to the floor and debating the subject even though he knows his oratory will not change the result. Senator Ben Tillman of South Carolina long was famous as a speaker in the Senate. While the Democrats were in the minority he used to argue long hours to block legislation and delay the passage of bills he thought were against the best interests of the people, although he well knew that the majority of the people were represented by men whose opinions differed from his.

At times in the Senate there are outbursts of oratory for no particular purpose except to give the speaker a chance to send out a flow of oratory. Senator J. Hamilton Lewis recently rose to national fame by his oratorical outbursts in the Upper House. It is a fine place for a man to advertise his ability as a chautauqua orator.

Sensors LaFollette, Bristow and Borah had their standing as chautauqua orators raised considerably after they entered the Senate. All Senators do not become chautauqua orators, but if they have any oratory in them they have a glorious opportunity to get on the chautauqua platform with a big salary if they can only break into the United States Senate.

In the Senate you can say most anything about anybody and still not be in danger of arrest. Senator Tillman is best known for invective. He could have given Cicero lessons. Senator Reed is also winning fame along the same line, though Reed's style is different from Tillman's.

The object of freedom of speech in the Senate is to give every man opportunity to tell his side of the case and possibly convert others to his belief. But that freedom of speech has been woefully abused. Senators are not always the most



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scrupulous of men. They would just as soon block needed legislation for political reasons as not.

That is shown clearly in great political questions no matter which party is in power. The minority hampers the majority as much as possible so as to win political advantage at the next election. The free speech of the Senate is seized by them for political purposes. Whether unlimited debate is a good or bad thing is for the experts to decide. All the onlooker knows is that there are plenty of Senators and have been plenty from earliest times in American history, who loved to delay business for their own personal glory.

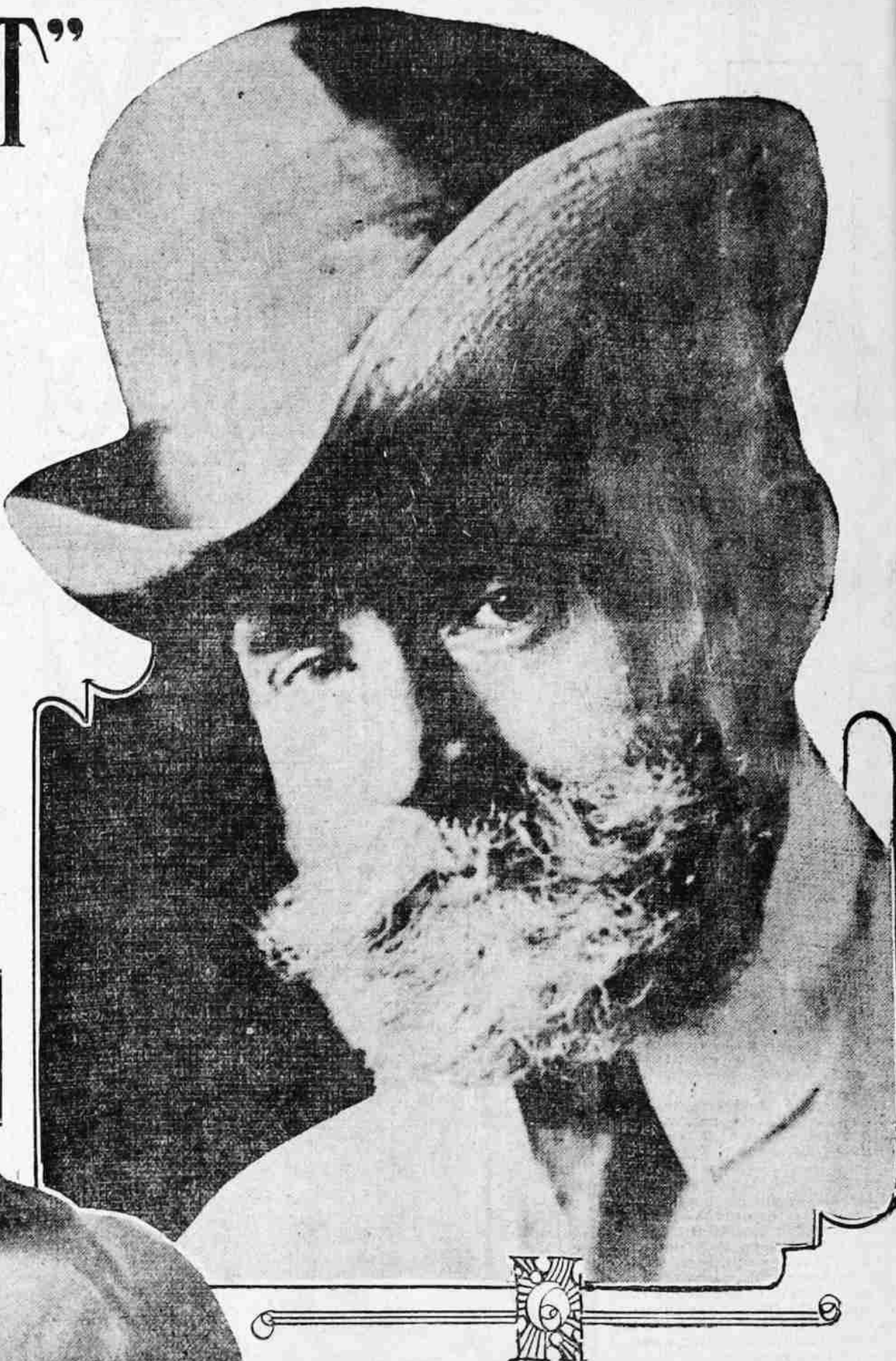
OWEN HAS TEMERITY TO PROPOSE CURTAILMENT.

It will be recalled that last ses-

sion Senator Owen of Oklahoma, who is to appear in the light of the President's floor leader on the repeal bill, actually had the temerity to advocate a cloture rule. "Temerity" is correct—because there was a terrific howl from those solons who are long on that fiction of "senatorial courtesy" which permits unlimited debate.

Those Senators who are veterans like to talk of the "open forum of debate," which exists under the ancient Senate rules. They hold that the Upper House is really more responsible to the will of the people because of this unlimited debate; that the staid and dignified procedure of the Senate acts as a brake on an impulsive House. They lay emphasis on the "deliberative" when they say the Senate "is the

UPPER left—B. R. Tillman. Upper right—J. Hamilton Lewis. Lower left—J. L. Bristow. Lower right—J. A. Reed.



greatest deliberative body in the world."

But the Senate is about to undergo a change. The direct elections law seems likely to sweep out a number of the old warhorses—the ones who are strongest for "senatorial courtesy." Already the membership of the Senate is being replaced by younger men. They are not quite so prone to regard the Senate rules as inviolable—a fetish to be regarded as all-powerful and sufficient.

Most of the "young blood" in the Senate sees that while this "senatorial courtesy" sounds fine and theoretically is an excellent thing, yet it can be twisted into a great abuse. One man can absolutely "block" any Senate action. He can prevent enactment of a bill.

Imagine a group of half a dozen or more Senators banded together to oppose a bill. Senatorial courtesy would permit their actually "talking the measure to death." Under strict reading of the rules, they could start on the opening day of the session, and, taking turns, talk throughout the whole session and never permit the bill they were fighting to come to a vote.

The only way in which a date may be set for a vote on any measure in the Senate is by unanimous consent. Therefore, if a Senator who is opposing a bill wants to take full advantage of his privilege all he has to do to prevent it from coming to a vote is to be on hand to talk and to object to a date being fixed for the roll call.

As in the courts, it is the precedents that are also binding on the Senate procedure. The rules in the upper house are not lengthy, but the precedents are almost numberless. They all establish, however, the inalienable right of a Senator to talk as much as he pleases, the right to hold the floor against all comers until he shall have yielded and rejection of any cloture rule.

There are many instances where measures have been talked to death in the Senate. These usually come at the close of the session when time is short and the majority is trying to rush a measure. The minority Senators start to talking and hold the floor against all comers until the session dies. Senators have

been honored for that thing because they have taken advantage of the rules to block legislation they thought was ruinous.

Only Natural.

"Speaking of animals, in my opinion the elephant is the cleverest of them," said the old circus man. "I remember once, many years ago, when Jacko, who was then under my charge, showed me one day that he could read."

"Oh, come now," said the listener. "I'll prove it to you in about two minutes," said the trainer. "Well, as I was saying, the old fellow got into a scrape with the Bengal tiger, and before we could get them separated he had his trunk badly damaged. After the scrimmage was over Jacko broke loose and started down the street fast. 'He's going wild,' somebody shouted. 'Don't you believe it,' says I. 'Now, where do you suppose that elephant went to?'"

"Went to the surgeon's I suppose. Can't you get up a better yarn?" "No, he didn't go to the surgeon's. He went straight to a little shop where a sign said, 'Trunks repaired while you wait.' Of course he had made a mistake. But what do you expect of a poor dumb brute?"

Adam's Distinction.

Pat, who had been summoned for beating his wife, did all he knew how to put the blame on his mother-in-law, and in consequence was chided by the Bench for his lack of gallantry.

"Why people should think it clever and right to malign their mothers-in-law, I don't know," remarked the Magistrate. "Is civility quite dead among us?" "I could," he added, "tell you of men who never once said an unkind word of their mothers-in-law, who never had the had taste to complain about their mother-in-law's actions, who never—"

"I only know of one, Your Honor," interrupted Pat. "The Magistrate scowled. "And if you want to know his name, Your Honor," went on Pat, "it's Adam."

"Papa," asked Willie, "what is phenomenal?" "It is phenomenal, my son," explained Mr. Wisepate, "when a lawyer is content with a nominal fee."

ONE-SIXTH OF PENNSYLVANIA LAID WASTE BY DEFORESTATION, ACCORDING TO REPORT OF STATE COMMISSIONER

At least one-sixth of the area of Pennsylvania is unproductive, depopulated and fast going into a desert condition because of destruction of the forests, according to Dr. J. T. Rothrock, former State Forest Commissioner.

"There is another feature which merits serious consideration," he said. "These barren areas are for the most part depopulated. So long as the timber lasted they were the homes of a rugged industrious population. As soon as the timber was gone, all of the most energetic young men left. Gradually most of the others left. Now you can pass over mile after mile and not see an inhabited house."

"There are counties in Pennsylv-

ania that were prosperous and populous so long as the timber lasted, but are now virtually bankrupt, and the end is not yet."

"We must not forget that in times of public peril many of the strongest arms and bravest hearts came out of the timber regions. They were the product of the backwoods. We may need them again."

"From the favored portion of Pennsylvania one might suppose the State, as a whole, was fertile, productive and rich in all that goes to make a prosperous and a contented community. We might lose sight of the fact that in the mountain regions there are areas aggregating at least one-sixth of the State which are unproductive, de-

populated and fast going into a desert condition.

"Still more alarming is the fact that though almost every citizen now recognizes the truth of these statements, the general public has never been so greatly concerned over it as to drive our lawmakers to take adequate restorative measures."

"Not only is the soil which we have denuded of timber in great part unfit for any other crop than timber, but owing to neglect, it is fast being further impoverished by the fires and floods which are allowed to sweep over it without adequate restraint."

"Timber gone and soil going, is the condition with us today, just

when the statement is officially made by the Federal Government that by 1930 the whole timber crop of the United States will virtually have been harvested. Sixteen years left for us to grow a crop of timber before the timber famine is upon us."

"If we make the largest possible allowance for doubt, as to the exact truth of the above estimate, the condition in our own State is so plain that we must consider prompt remedial action the most pressing duty before the people today. It ranks in importance with public schools and public health, which, with forest restoration, should be the trinity of prime importance for official consideration. Our State owes to

itself that not less than 20,000,000 trees be annually planted and protected on our present denuded areas."

"The oft-repeated statement that if forest fires are kept down these areas will forest themselves without our care is only partly true, because there are areas over which there is no sign of restoration, and there are no areas on which natural restoration shows a coming crop of the most desirable timber. The crop is a mixture of good and bad timber, which, useful as it may be as a soil cover and water-conserving factor, does not meet the need of producing the timber the State will require in the near future."

"Pennsylvania has now one mil-

lion acres of forest reserve, which is being as well cared for as possible under existing appropriations, but this represents only forty miles square. Yet we know that there are at least eighty miles square which require immediate attention. In other words, the area cared for is only one-fourth of that which should be reforested without delay. We are neglecting three-fourths of this pressing duty. How can we excuse ourselves to the future?"

"If there is one fact that we may consider as proved in the latest utterance of science, it is that forests do aid in conserving the rainfall and maintain the even flow of water in our streams and springs."

"At this very hour our national

Congress, recognizing the vast importance of water power to the industries of the country, is considering how this may be most wisely utilized in benefit of all the people. So transcendently important does it seem that the question is debated in how far the reserved rights of the States may be invaded to care for all the people of the country. It is fully recognized that the protection and increase of our forest areas has become essential to national prosperity."

"What do you do when you want your dog to come to you?" "I speak to him."

"Does he understand you?" "Certainly! Don't you understand when people speak to you?"